

List of Policy Recommendations

Introduction

Throughout the chapters of the report, the Commission makes recommendations in essentially two categories: sports and recreation opportunities and regional policies and funding. Included in this excerpt, below, is a basic listing of the policy and funding recommendations on various topics that the Commission believed had regional significance. They are covered in more detail in Section 4, but are included in this preview since the specific recommendations are key to the Commission’s “message”.

For a comprehensive list of all recommendations, including the sports and recreation opportunity recommendations, see Appendix A or they can be found at the beginning of each chapter on any given topic

4.1.1 King County’s Role and Vision for a New Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation System

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| <p>4.1.1(a) King County should dramatically narrow its role solely to being a provider, leader, and/or catalyst for truly regional parks (passive, mixed-use, and active), sports complexes, and other recreation facilities. 397</p> <p>4.1.1(b) King County should take immediate steps to divest itself of all small local parks and recreation facilities through the empowerment of local community groups and jurisdictions and/or the establishment of park service areas, districts, or other available tools to allow operations and maintenance of the sites at the local level. 397</p> <p>4.1.1(c) In addition to large regional parks, the redefined regional role should include active facilities that meet one or more of the following criteria: 1. More than 50% of the facility’s usage is by teams, associations, or other groups that are individually comprised of members or players from throughout the region (i.e. select teams, all stars, emerging sports and activities, etc.) 2. The facility serves a unique sport or activity that has none or very few other facilities in the entire region (i.e. Velodrome, Cricket, X-games park, regional indoor climbing center, etc.) 3. The facility has a specific collection of features that are not available at local or other facilities in the region and thereby draws mostly regional usage (indoor</p> | <p>sportsfields, most larger skate parks, etc.) 4. Contains features and infrastructure of such a significant scope, size, or number that it can host major regional and/or national tournaments or other events..... 397</p> <p>4.1.1(d) Community empowerment and creative partnerships must be the cornerstone of all new and existing governance structures, policies, and funding strategies in order to build a long term, positive, and direct relationship between citizens and user groups, and their parks, sports, and recreation facilities. 397</p> <p>4.1.1(e) In the absence of any other available governance structure, the County’s regional parks, sports, and recreation function should reside in its own top-level, independent Department and/or maintain as direct of a voter relationship as possible. 397</p> <p>4.1.1(f) As an initial component of the transition to a more independent governance structure, the general government overhead should be removed from the parks budget. 397</p> <p>4.1.1(g) The parks, sports, and recreation system’s actual and perceived spending priority among other government functions, even during times of reductions, must remain at a proportionate level that reflects the expectations of the voters. Within the current discretionary CX environment, this should translate to a high priority, not the last priority. 397</p> |
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4.1.1(h)	The Commission supports the general concept of a park, sports, and recreation system that has a direct relationship with voters and that the region's system should move towards a governance model that is more independent, however, the Commission does not support the MPD tool as it is currently available in state statute.397	“maintenance endowments” or other similar tools as part of their upfront “capital” costs. This would <u>not include operations</u> , in general, and would be best used for ADOP-empowered sites.405
4.1.1(i)	An MPD or other independent parks governance model should have a separately elected board.397	4.1.2(d) A significant portion of the REET funded acquisition should go to ADOP-compatible projects and other creative or otherwise entrepreneurial partnerships in order to reduce future operations and maintenance costs associated with REET-funded acquisitions.....405
4.1.1(j)	An MPD or other independent parks governance model should have a clear regional focus. Most of its political, administrative, and financial priorities should be dedicated towards shepherding a regional vision for regional facilities through direct investments and/or by partnering with and empowering local jurisdictions, sports groups, community groups, and other stakeholders.397	4.1.2(e) The County should maintain accurate supplement/revenue ratios for active facilities and continue to ensure that user fee levels represent the most effective revenue balance.405
4.1.1(k)	The region should maintain a permanent community-based advisory body whose members are voting citizens with extensive knowledge of the regional parks, sports, and recreation system. This advisory body should provide an ongoing review of all acquisitions, policies, and other components of the regional system and offer specific recommendations that meet the canons of the new regional vision.398	4.1.2(f) The expectation of premium user fees should be integrated into all new premium regional competitive level facilities at amounts, that, in conjunction with other on-site revenue, covers a significant portion of the premium facility's maintenance.405
4.1.2 Funding and Financing Tools in an Era of Reduced Jurisdictional Resources		4.1.2(g) ADOP's and similar inter-jurisdictional and/or community-based partnerships should be implemented for <u>all new</u> active sports and recreation facilities that are ADOP-compatible. Nearly all facility recommendations in Section 3 are ADOP compatible if ADOP partners can be identified and empowered.405
4.1.2(a)	King County should continue to maintain some level of discretionary CX commitment to the regional parks, sports, and recreation system.405	4.1.2(h) The region should implement mechanisms that allow for facility-specific bonds and loans for premium facilities financed on their independently verified, anticipated revenue streams.405
4.1.2(b)	If King County moves the operations and maintenance of the parks, sports, and recreation system to a new revenue source, it should direct the CX funds otherwise committed to parks towards ADOPs, entrepreneurial infrastructures, and other innovative applications..405	4.1.2(i) Using direct capital investments and partnerships with private businesses, non-profits, and other service providers, the region should aggressively pursue entrepreneurial infrastructures, services, and other on-site revenue at all parks, sports, and recreation sites and facilities. Infrastructures and services must be considered an “added-benefit” and not detract from the primary purpose of the facility.405
4.1.2(c)	REET funds should continue to go towards capital acquisition, however, mechanisms should be established by which REET-funded projects can have site-specific	4.1.2(j) As part of a larger entrepreneurial strategy, the region should aggressively pursue sponsorships and naming rights of <u>active sports and recreation facilities</u> , especially for new regional-caliber active sports facilities. The

region should protect the overall identity of large mixed-use parks, however, and only consider sponsorships and naming rights that are tasteful and that represent community-responsible organizations and businesses.

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- 4.1.2(k) The County should preserve, enhance, and expand the Youth Sports Facilities Grant Program (YSFG). It should be dramatically expanded to include larger grants for regional-caliber facilities through ADOPs and other creative community-based or inter-jurisdictional partnerships. YSFG is the most efficient application of public dollars and represents all the values and benefits that the Commission embraces. 405
- 4.1.2(l) A regional park foundation should be established that compliments and embraces the regional vision. Its mission should be flexible enough to leverage support from a variety of areas, but focused on the canons of the new regional parks, sports, and recreation vision.. 406
- 4.1.2(m) The County should evaluate development impact mitigation set-asides (fee or land) to ensure that its application is yielding the highest public benefit and that they are being appropriately considered on a case by case basis. 406
- 4.1.2(n) Neither the County, specifically, nor the region, generally, should pursue a regional bond, levy, or other voter-approved funding structure until a clear redefined regional role and omni-jurisdictional mission is adopted. 406
- 4.1.2(o) Any future regional bond, levy, or other voter-approved funding structure should embrace all the new ways of doing business depicted in this report and include a “wow factor” that sparks regional civic pride, as opposed to only attempting to meet a minimal level of basic need. 406
- 4.1.2(p) The region’s parks, sports, and recreation system should continue to have a criminal and juvenile justice (CJ and JJ) component. Appropriately structured parks, sports, and recreation opportunities have clear prevention and intervention benefits. To fund such programming, new and creative CJ and JJ investments should be considered,

including funds from asset forfeitures, bench fines, etc. Funds already dedicated to parks, sports, and recreation for prevention and intervention purposes should be increased..... 406

4.2.1 Separate but Equal: The Passive, Mixed Use, and Active Park Continuum

- 4.2.1(a) The region must continue to have a robust continuum of separate, but equal, open space, passive, mixed-use, and active park assets. 415
- 4.2.1(b) The region needs more complexes that are solely dedicated to intense recreational use in order to reduce the active pressure on our mixed-use parks and open space system..... 415
- 4.2.1(c) Preservation and open space acquisition programs that displace active recreation needs or potential should have components that mitigate the displacement at other, more appropriate sites. Preservation programs will not be successful unless the active demands at those sites are removed..... 415

4.2.2 Parks and Farmlands: Better Partnerships for Increased Public Benefit

- 4.2.2(a) Agricultural and parkland acquisitions need to be better coordinated in order to develop more mutually constructive partnerships and ultimately maximize long-term public benefit. To achieve this, the County should implement a formal joint review process regarding acquisitions that is independent of agency administrators and electeds..... 417
- 4.2.2(b) Public investments in farmland activities that are extractive, harmful to soil resources, or applications that are otherwise not dependent on soil resources do not meet the spirit of farmland preservation and offer very little public benefit. The region should work with farmland advocates to reduce such uses in favor of more small-scale sustainable food production (local, organic,

etc.) through increased partnerships and better integration between parks and farmlands.417

- 4.2.2(c) Contrary to current policy, it is the Commission's belief that parks and small-scale sustainable agriculture are compatible.....417

4.2.3 Land Acquisition in an Era of Reduced Jurisdictional Resources

- 4.2.3(a) The region should establish a decision process, independent of parks administrators, that identifies and analyzes potential land acquisitions and makes recommendations that ensure the maximum public benefit. Preference should be given for land acquisitions that support ADOPs and other creative or entrepreneurial applications.....419
- 4.2.3(b) A balance between lands primarily for active use and lands primarily for preservation purposes should always be maintained. The region should recognize, however, that the REET funds currently available for parkland acquisition are essentially the only significant source of funds for active land acquisition, whereas there are many additional sources for preservation land acquisition.419
- 4.2.3(c) Land acquisition for regional sports and recreation facilities should not be solely focused on outlying and/or unincorporated areas. Acquisition opportunities in incorporated areas and/or commercial or industrial areas that have regional potential should also be pursued in conjunction with local jurisdictions.....419

4.3.1 Parks, Sports, and Recreation Facilities and Neighborhood Relations

- 4.3.1(a) Jurisdictions should continue to proactively and persistently include neighbors in the planning and development of new or improved sports fields and utilize all strategies and latest technologies for impact mitigation. Jurisdictions must ensure that all stakeholders are included and that the needs of the community at-large are appropriately weighed.....423

- 4.3.1(b) Jurisdictions should continue requiring all sports leagues, organizations, associations, and other user groups to have formal and enforceable "good neighbor" policies for their members..... 423

- 4.3.1(c) Using inter-jurisdictional and/or community-based partnerships, the region should create more high capacity, centralized complexes in non-intrusive areas (industrial areas and other non-residential areas) and/or maximize existing complexes in non-residential areas in order to reduce the active sports pressure on neighborhood parks and facilities. 423

4.3.2 Accessible Parks, Sports, and Recreation: Developing Equal Choices and Full Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities in King County

- 4.3.2(a) The region should proactively develop more inclusive recreation by partnering with a single community-based organization whose sole purpose is to assist with the development of specific accessible recreation opportunities (training, equipment, etc.) and bridge those opportunities to people with disabilities in King County. 425
- 4.3.2(b) The region should support the development of an on-line centralized, community-based, and multi-jurisdictional resource in conjunction with the above partner(s) that depicts the existing and newly developed accessible recreation opportunities. 425

4.3.3 Parks, Sports, and Recreation as a Tool for Community-based Prevention and Intervention

- 4.3.3(a) While there is a need to increase the amount of opportunities across the spectrum, the region must also ensure the maximum variety of opportunities within the parks, sports, and recreation system. The diversity of sports and recreation opportunities, especially non-traditional activities, emerging sports, etc is a key factor in reaching all the region's youth and ultimately

contributes to the system's effectiveness as a prevention and intervention tool..... 427

- 4.3.3(b) A parks, sports, and recreation system does not inherently have delinquency and drug use prevention and intervention qualities. To enhance the probability of such benefits occurring, prevention and intervention science should be integrated into all aspects of the program design. Programs should focus on reducing or mitigating risk factors that increase the likelihood of youth engaging in antisocial behavior, as well as, enhancing protective factors and community and youth assets that reduce the chance of such engagement. Programs should draw from the scientific literature of best practices. 427

4.4.1 The Regional Aquatics System: The Past, Present, and Future of the Forward Thrust Pools

- 4.4.1(a) Establish a Regional Aquatics Task Force to: 1. Negotiate the preservation of King County's school-sited forward thrust pools with the respective school districts, local jurisdictions, sports associations, community groups, and other stakeholders. 2. Design a new regional aquatics vision and make infrastructure and programming proposals that will address existing and future aquatics needs. 3. Develop new detailed strategies for funding and financing of aquatics facilities using entrepreneurial tools and innovative cost controls. 432
- 4.4.1(b) Using inter-jurisdictional and/or community-based partnerships, create at least two 50-meter facilities with diving boards, one in the East part of King County, one in the North..... 432
- 4.4.1(c) Explore and implement modern heat exchange technologies and other capital investments that will reduce long term maintenance and operations costs at new and existing pool facilities. 432
- 4.4.1(d) Apply equal standards of revenue expectations and subsidization ratios for new and existing aquatic

facilities as that of all other sites or facilities in the regional parks, sports, and recreation system. 432

4.4.2 Athletic Field Surfaces in the Central Puget Sound Region

- 4.4.2(a) To dramatically reduce the overall operations and maintenance costs, increase the capacity, and reduce the environmental impact of the region's athletic fields, and, ultimately, reduce the need for more land, the region must invest in more infill (rubber and sand) synthetic surfaces where the location and usage requirements are appropriate..... 434
- 4.4.2(b) When considering an infill synthetic surface, the following factors should be considered: 1. Volume, demand, and types of anticipated use 2. Existing topography 3. Existing infrastructure (restrooms, parking, etc.) 4. Community support and potential impact 5. Quality, playability, and durability of various synthetic surface options. Not all are well designed. 434
- 4.4.2(c) Infill synthetic surfaces are not a luxury reserved for the collegiate or professional level. Considering our region's climate, they are a sound investment of public recreation funds, suitable for all levels of play. 434
- 4.4.2(d) Infill synthetic surfaces must be lighted for maximum usage and efficiency. 434
- 4.4.2(e) To reduce injury, convert existing Astroturf™ and similar surfaces to infill surfaces. 434
- 4.4.2(f) Existing grass fields should be used more responsibly and cost-effectively by: 1. Increasing shared maintenance agreements and volunteer labor 2. Implementing responsible scheduling practices that limit over-use 3. Defining a clear separation of athletic fields from open grassy areas used to host festivals or event parking. 4. Reviewing technological advances in grass seeds and planting options 434

4.4.3 Risk Management and the Recreational Immunity Act

- 4.4.3(a) Liability and risk management issues present recurring and often unreasonable barriers to creative partnerships and programming between public, private, and community-based organizations. The region should support a multi-jurisdictional resource with risk management expertise that actively represents the interests of community-based partnerships by negotiating risk management issues on behalf of those partnerships with the liability stakeholders of any given project or program.....444

- 4.4.4(c) Jurisdictions should better incorporate existing jurisdictional transportation resources (shuttles, vans, buses, etc.) into community sports and recreation programs. 446

- 4.4.4(d) The region should partner with community-based organizations and jurisdictions to support inter-jurisdictional transportation solutions that connect users with facilities that are not otherwise available in any given area. (i.e. skatepark shuttles, etc.) 446

4.4.4 Transportation in a New Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation System

- 4.4.4(a) The region should take proactive steps to integrate permanent youth transportation solutions into the design and programming of all parks, sports, and recreation opportunities, including but not limited to existing jurisdictional transportation resources (buses, shuttles, vans, etc).446
- 4.4.4(b) The regional parks, sports, and recreation system should work with Metro to identify and take proactive steps to develop well-promoted and easy to use public transportation routes, using creatively identified buses and/or shuttles that directly and permanently connect the region's marquee parks, sports, and recreation sites and opportunities.....446

The Components of the “Living” Report

Introduction

This report in its entirety is intended to be a living document. The Commission realized that the overall picture of the regional parks, sports, and recreation system’s current stakeholders, shortages, and needs is better represented by an evolving document where a permanent connection with its contributors and authors is a key component of the new regional vision. Listening to and documenting the issues concerning a specific sports governing body or a particular local jurisdiction on a regular basis is a fundamental link that is missing from regional leadership. With 100 sports, 60 jurisdictions, and many other stakeholders, this documentation begins to paint a very big picture with many strokes and colors. The picture’s message is very simple, however; there is ample opportunity and a tremendous need for regional leadership that transcends jurisdictional boundaries and empowers sports and recreation groups, community, and local jurisdictions to embrace a regional parks, sports, and recreation renaissance. This report is intended to serve as the framework for maintaining this information and in addition to this introduction (Section 1), essentially contains three major components:

- **Sports and Recreation Profiling Chapters**
- **Jurisdictional Profiling Chapters**
- **Policy Chapters**

In conjunction to the report, the Commission has initiated two projects that are key to the new regional vision:

- **Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation Community Partners Directory**
- **Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation Facility Mapping and Inventory System**

Section 2: Sports and Recreation Opportunity Profiling Chapters

The report covers approximately 100 sport and recreation opportunities that exist in King County. These chapters cover the history of the sport, in general, how it exists in King County, the

challenges facing the opportunities, and resources for more information regarding the sport and/or its local organizations.

The Commission identified and met with or otherwise reached out to local governing bodies and other representatives of each sport to hear their concerns and ideas about preserving their sports in the region and to provide input and/or to serve as authors for their respective chapters.

Section 3: Jurisdictional Profiling Chapters

The Commission believes a crucial component of a regional vision is its relationship with existing local jurisdictions. To better understand the importance of the local jurisdiction and their potential as partners in a new regional parks, sports, and recreation renaissance, the Commission has chosen to profile each jurisdiction’s demographics statistics, history, innovative parks, sports, and recreation projects, and their challenges, both internal and as a partner in a regional system. Jurisdictions were invited to submit comments on their parks, sports, and recreation system’s overall status, successes, and challenges.

Section 4: Policy Recommendation Chapters

Section 4 is where additional narrative regarding the policy recommendations can be found. There are 12 chapters contained in 4 subsections covering the following topics:

- King County’s Role and Vision for a New Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation System
- Funding and Financing Tools in an Era of Reduced Jurisdictional Resources
- Separate but Equal: The Passive, Mixed Use, and Active Park Continuum
- Parks and Farmlands: Better Partnerships for Increased Public Benefits
- Land Acquisition in an Era of Reduced Jurisdictional Resources
- Parks, Sports, and Recreation Facilities and Neighborhood Relations
- Accessible Parks, Sports, and Recreation: Developing Equal Choices and Full Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities

- Parks, Sports, and Recreation as a Tool for Community-based Prevention and Intervention
- The Regional Aquatics System: The Past, Present, and Future of the Forward Thrust Pools
- Athletic Field Surfaces in the Central Puget Sound Region
- Risk Management and the Recreational Immunity Act
- Transportation in a New Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation System

The recommendations regarding these topics can be found at the beginning of each chapter, as well as, the list included in this introduction. For a complete list of recommendations, including those pertaining sports and recreation opportunities and needs please see Appendix A.

Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation Community Partners Directory

In addition to this report, the Commission has compiled a directory of parks, sports, and recreation community partners which contains parks jurisdictions, schools, non-profits, sports groups, businesses, and many other individuals and organizations that are connected to parks, sports, recreation, and/or youth, in general. There are currently over 4,200 organizations in the directory. The directory will require constant updating and the Commission feels maintaining such a directory and actively communicating with its members is an important component of a new regional vision and the system's connection with the voters.

Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation Facility Mapping and Inventory System

The Commission also initiated a mapping and inventory project in order to accurately identify and study every parks, sports, and recreation facility in the region. The Commission has identified and mapped over 2000 sites in King County that have some kind of recreation amenities. Completing the identification of these sites' features and mapping them will provide an important public resource, as well as, a crucial tool for the region to use in determining the location and attributes needed for new regional facilities. This process is not complete and will require additional County mapping resources and additional staff time to complete the inventory.